

a budget. If we do not do that, we will not be able to deal with tax reductions, which I think are terribly important, not only as a matter of fairness to the American people but as a matter of helping this economy and moving it forward as quickly as we can.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CLINTON). The Senator from Missouri.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mrs. CARNAHAN. Madam President, we will have many important debates over the coming year on this Senate floor. Debates about tax cuts, spending priorities, education and defense, health care and agriculture. But none of these debates will be more important to the future of our democratic process than the debate over campaign finance reform.

From the time I sat at our kitchen table balancing the books on my husband's earliest campaign to his race for the U.S. Senate, I have witnessed the changing face of campaigns.

Last year's U.S. Senate race in Missouri shattered all previous records. The two opposing campaigns spent almost \$18 million. This figure does not include spending by the state parties or outside interest groups.

For \$18 million, Missouri could have done any one of the following:

- built two new elementary schools;
- hired 500 new teachers;
- sent 3800 students to the University of Missouri;
- provided day care to an additional 5000 low-income children;
- put 9,000 new computers into our schools.

There is no accounting of the hours and effort that went into raising these large sums of money. It is time and energy I am sure all Senators would rather spend discussing the issues and dealing with problems affecting their constituents.

The traditional face-to-face visits with voters at the State fair, the local diner or a town hall play a much smaller role in modern political campaigns. Instead, candidates introduce themselves with costly and skillfully packaged commercials.

According to a recent study, viewers in the Kansas City area were exposed to over 22,000 campaign commercials during the 2000 election cycle. At 30 seconds apiece, that is the equivalent of 187 straight hours of campaign ads. The same study showed that the number of ads nationwide has nearly tripled since 1998. Without reform, there is no end in sight.

Not only do candidates air ads to get their own message out, they must also respond to negative attacks. More and more, our political discourse is turning away from an honest discussion of the issues affecting the average American. Personal attacks and outrageous distortions are all too common.

What are the consequences?

Today, Americans are more cynical and more disconnected from the government than ever. They read of huge contributions from special interest groups and wonder how one small voice can possibly be heard over the shouts of large donors to political campaigns.

Election day for them is not a celebration of self-government, but a finale to months of nasty, negative messages that have invaded their homes and mailboxes.

To rejuvenate our democracy, we must change the common perception and reality that our political system is dominated by big money. To wean American politics from these excesses will be costly and painful, but we must begin.

While many reforms are necessary, purging the system of unlimited donations to campaigns through so called "soft money" is a necessary first step.

Some would argue that passing McCain-Feingold will hurt the Democratic Party, but I say if we do not pass McCain-Feingold, we will be hurting the democratic process.

This is a time when all of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, must do what is right for our country, what is right for our democracy.

The Biblical account of Joshua and the battle of Jericho shows us the strength of a united voice. We are told that "the people shouted with a great shout, so that the walls fell down."

If we speak with one voice, the wall of "soft money" that separates ordinary citizens from their government will come down. Only then can we be confident that campaigns are decided by the power of our ideas, not by the power of our pocketbooks.

I enthusiastically support campaign finance reform and hope that we can pass legislation that reduces the influence of money in politics.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND JACKIE STILES

Mrs. CARNAHAN. Madam President, this month we celebrate Women's History Month. It is an opportunity to reflect on the successes, advances and contributions women have made and are making in American life.

Today, I have the special privilege of honoring a woman who is not only celebrating women's history this month—she is making it.

Jackie Stiles stands 5 feet 8 inches tall, but she is a giant on and off the court. Earlier this week, she led the Lady Bears of Southwest Missouri State into victory over Washington, securing her team a spot in the NCAA Final Four. It was the latest accomplishment in the life of this remarkable young woman.

In high school, she was a 14-time state track champion and once scored 71 points in a single basketball game.

Her fans would show up at nine in the morning with lounge chairs to be first in line when the gym doors opened at 4:30. They just wanted to catch a glimpse of Jackie in action. She is a hero in her home town—and in towns across America where young girls dream impossible dreams. Jackie shows them dreams can happen.

At Southwest Missouri State, Jackie Stiles has scored—as of today—3,361 points, becoming the all-time leading scorer in the NCAA. She has also become the heart of the Lady Bears. Every time she plays, she thrills the sell out crowds at the Hammons Student Center—better known as the "House of Stiles."

On Friday, the team will come home to Missouri for the Final Four. And with all due respect to my colleagues from the great state of Indiana, I predict a big win over Purdue for Jackie Stiles and the Lady Bears.

Jackie Stiles didn't become a star overnight. She does it the hard way—the only way she knows how. She began training at age two with her father and has pushed herself ever since. She goes to the gym and won't leave until she makes 1,000 shots.

The story of Jackie Stiles is also the story of Title IX, the landmark civil rights legislation which set out to curtail discrimination against women and girls in education and athletics. Without Title IX, we might never have heard of heroes like Jackie Stiles. In 1971, the year before Title IX, only 25,000 women competed in college sports. Today, that figure has grown to more than 135,000 women—including one very talented player who wears the number ten jersey for Southwest Missouri State.

Jackie's success is measured in more than just rebounds, lay-ups, and jump shots. She has brought attention to women's sports, and has proven that women's basketball is exciting. Most of all, she is a role model and an inspiration for thousands of girls.

If she chooses, Jackie's next stop is probably the WNBA. I have no doubt that she will become one of the league's greatest attractions. She will help not only her team but her sport and all those who appreciate and enjoy it.

Mr. President, in honor of Women's History Month, I'd like to offer my congratulations to Jackie Stiles, the Lady Bears of Southwest Missouri State, and all the other heroes who are bringing women's sports to a new high and teaching young girls to follow their dreams. May they continue to thrill, entertain, and inspire us.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, with the consent of my friend from Kentucky, I ask unanimous consent we extend the morning hour until 2:30, and